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## *The Twenty-One Blue Horses*

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## The Twenty-One Blue Horses

by Lala Heine-Koehn

You promised to rub my body with floss silk  
scented with chrysanthemums to keep it  
supple and young forever.

You promised to give me twenty one blue horses  
to take me wherever I want and no one,  
not even they will dare to ask  
where and for how long.

I will wear the cherry cloak you promised,  
lined with the most exuberant red  
that will billow around me like wings  
of a moon-struck bird and we will fly, fly,  
the horses and I.

I will paint with gossamer the inexplicable  
landscape of the camphor tree that grows  
a thousand branches, a branch for each  
sad care that troubles those who love.

No one, not even I, will know  
which branch belongs to whom and why.

When I see you waiting on the bridge  
where the magpies' wings meet, I will ask you  
to give me a bowl of gruel made of seven herbs  
you picked to ward off spirits who devour  
the body and soul. For you promised,  
remember, to keep my body supple and young  
and twenty one blue horses to take me  
where no even they will dare to ask.